

---

**NEWS From:**

---

---

**Congressman Mike Honda**

---

---

**FIFTEENTH DISTRICT - CALIFORNIA**

---



For Immediate Release  
April 3, 2003

Contact: Ruben Pulido Jr. 202.225.3327  
[ruben.pulido@mail.house.gov](mailto:ruben.pulido@mail.house.gov)

## **Rep. Honda Introduces Legislation to Increase Teacher Retention Rates**

WASHINGTON, April 3, 2003 — Today, Rep. Mike Honda (D – San Jose) introduced bipartisan legislation in Congress to establish a competitive grant program for teacher mentoring programs. Funds would be awarded on a competitive basis to local educational agencies (LEAs) for a 3-year period, with at least 50 percent of the funds going to low-income LEAs.

“As a former teacher and principal, I know first-hand about the challenges new teachers face as they begin their careers,” said Rep. Honda. “Recent reports conclude that nearly one quarter of teachers leave the teaching profession by the end of their second year, and almost half of them leave within five years. This revolving-door phenomenon is a serious problem, and a drain on schools resources due to the costs of rehiring and retraining. My legislation is aimed at giving new teachers the support they need so that they can have extended, fulfilling careers, so our children can learn and benefit from their experience.”

During the 1999-2000 academic year, schools throughout the country hired approximately 535,000 teachers. Just a year later, approximately 252,000 teachers transferred to different schools, and 287,000 left the profession altogether. Unfortunately, this is not a unique phenomenon. According to a report released by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) in January 2003, nearly 25 percent of new teachers quit by the end of their second year, and almost 50 percent of them leave within five years. These statistics are even more alarming in high-poverty schools where the turnover rate is almost one-third higher than the national average. Teachers without mentoring programs have been shown to leave the profession at a rate almost 70 percent higher than those with mentoring programs.

-more-

“Children learn best from teachers who are well-trained, and have gained valuable experience,” said Linda T. Murray, Ph.D., Superintendent, San Jose Unified School District. “Congressman Honda's teacher mentoring act would establish a grant program to increase teacher development and teacher retention rates throughout the country. I am glad to support this legislation.”

Teachers who leave the profession often point to support programs for beginning teachers as a key to increasing retention rates. One critical source of support can be found through teacher mentoring programs that pair new teachers with experienced educators serving as mentors. A large majority of school districts today have enacted teacher mentoring programs that have proven successful in retaining teachers. Unfortunately, these essential programs often struggle to acquire the necessary resources to stay afloat.

The Teacher Mentoring Act has the support of the National Education Association (NEA), and is co-sponsored by eight members of the Education and Workforce Committee: Reps. George Miller (ranking member), Vernon Ehlers (Republican), Timothy Bishop, Ed Case, Eliot Engel, Raul Grijalva, Ruben Hinojosa, Major Owens, and Chris Van Hollen. The legislation is also co-sponsored by Reps. Zoe Lofgren, Xavier Becerra, Martin Frost, Rush Holt, Darlene Hooley, Jay Inslee, Steve Israel, Stephanie Tub Jones, Tom Lantos, Sheila Jackson Lee, Juanita Millender McDonald, Grace Napolitano, Ciro Rodriguez, C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger, Linda Sanchez, and Hilda Solis.